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Partners in Care & Health

The Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services are Partners in Care and Health (PCH), working with other well-respected organisations.

PCH helps councils to improve the way they deliver adult social care and public health services and helps Government understand the challenges faced by the sector.

PCH is a proud partner of, and collaborator with, the TEC Action Alliance

Home Care Optimisation supported by Digital Technology: a PCH Study.

- Challenge – 178,000 unfilled vacancies, 40% turnover, 22% NCTR rate, exacerbated by homecare capacity, people not getting care when they need it (12% deficit), annualised cost pressures >20%.

- Potential solutions – zonal optimisation using GIS, scheduling tools, virtual visits (tec enabled), Trusted Practice (system portal entries) (10% > in Dorset. 11% cost <) etc…..

- Study showed - technologies have only been deployed for these purposes in 25% of councils and in 73% of these cases, technologies have been deployed in isolation or are have not yet progressed beyond a pilot.

- Meanwhile Home Office visa data show the number of visas issued to social care workers, excluding dependants, reached a record 106,000 in 2023.

- Why?

Barriers to adoption

Despite the scale of homecare pressures and the potential for technology to provide a solution, the evidence shows limited adoption by homecare commissioners. To understand the barriers to adoption and ways to overcome them, survey and focus group work was undertaken in January 2024.

In summary, four types of challenge were identified; they are summarised below and opposite.

THE FOUR TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION CHALLENGES

MARKET · INFORMATION · PEOPLE · FUNDING · HOMECARE TECH
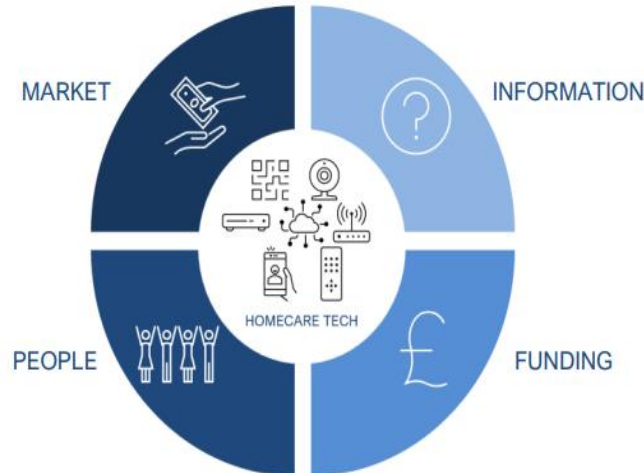
INFORMATION CHALLENGE

- Understanding the need that requires a commissioning response
- Awareness of the how technology can help with commissioning challenges
- Understanding the benefits and limitations of the available technologies

FUNDING CHALLENGE

- How to justify an investment in technology within constrained budgets

PEOPLE CHALLENGE

- Having a reliable and repeatable way to secure buy-in from people, families and social care operations to the adoption of technology enabled ways of working
- Securing the capacity and skills to deploy the technology and deliver the benefits

MARKET CHALLENGE

- Making the desired change attractive to commercial providers
- Ensuring adoption of technology by all providers
- Embedding new technologies within a coherent homecare offer and existing frameworks
- Integrating and exploiting data from multiple providers and systems
- Addressing General Data Protection Regulation considerations

What commissioners and tech providers want from each other

A survey and interviews were undertaken with homecare technology providers in January and February 2024, as part of which, respondents were asked to comment on their perspective of how commissioners and councils could encourage uptake of relevant technologies. The responses were collated thematically and presented to a group of homecare commissioners and the TEC Services Association (TSA) who in turn provided feedback on how technology providers could encourage uptake of their offer. Both views are presented below and reinforce themes identified earlier in this report as well as identify novel challenges and proposals.

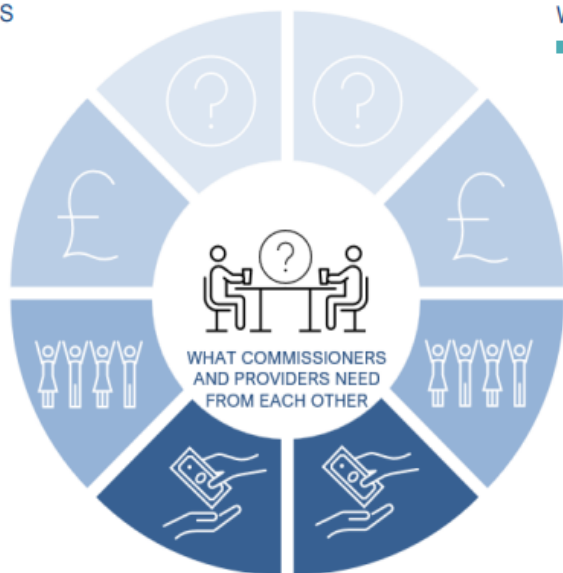## WHAT COMMISSIONERS WANT FROM TECH PROVIDERS

INFORMATION CHALLENGE
- Focus marketing activity on the outcomes that can be achieved for commissioners rather than descriptions of product features
- Understand council commissioning challenges and the limitations under which commissioners work

FUNDING CHALLENGE
- Invest in obtaining robust evaluation of the benefits of your technology

MARKET CHALLENGE
- Understand the risks in small-firm funding in the medium term and help address these in commercial models
- A less onerous and expensive way of renting back data from the cloud

WHAT COMMISSIONERS AND PROVIDERS NEED FROM EACH OTHER

WHAT TECH PROVIDERS WANT FROM COMMISSIONERS

INFORMATION CHALLENGE
- Clear statement of the problem councils are hoping can be solved with technology

FUNDING CHALLENGE
- Use more substantial commissioning budgets rather than technology budgets to commission technology where the benefits impact commissioning budgets directly
- Rely on the benefits demonstrated from other council pilots rather than commission another at additional time and expense

PEOPLE CHALLENGE
- Acknowledge the need for dedicated implementation support, either internally or externally, to ensure technology is implemented properly and benefits realised
- Digital education to be an element of council management development; current uptake can be dependent on a digitally-savvy DASS

Reinforcing key messages

1. We need to re-focus on people, their families and unpaid carers and what they want – build trust.

2. We need to get ahead of the curve by supporting people who self-manage their health and wellbeing - empower

3. Awareness of TEC options and benefits must be accelerated – build evidence, share risk

4. Trustable TEC needs to be easily recognisable – adopt standards

5. We need to move away from pilots to a body of evidence – scaling, take down barriers

6. Address any perceived conflict between personalisation and scale – different technologies working together
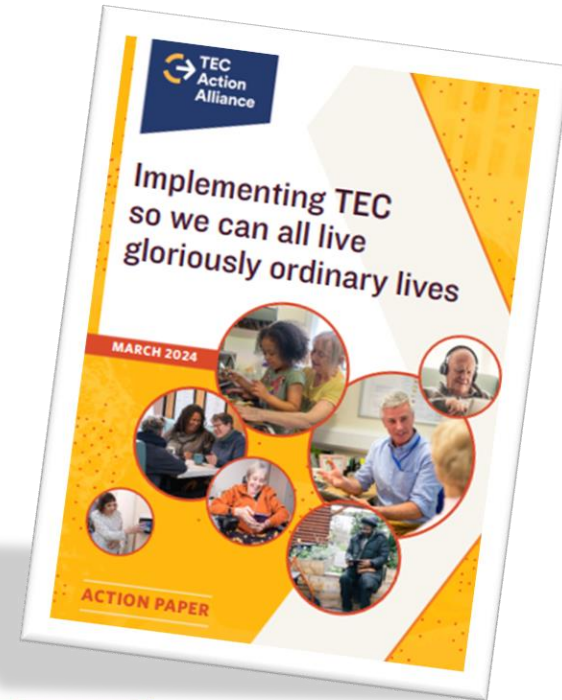
> *This Action Paper is a rallying call to our far-reaching, innovative sector to consider how they can continue building relationships with care and support commissioners but also reach new cohorts.*

TEC Action Alliance